Docket 95-4

TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

CABLE TV • MICROWAVE • SATELLITE • STUDIO

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ENGINEERING COMPANY

March 28, 1990

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Chairman Al Sikes
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Sikes:

To follow up on our February 21 meeting with regard to how we can go forward toward automating the Syndex and the Non-Dupe requirements, please find attached a letter dated March 7, 1990 from Mr. Robert C. Copriviza, President of Real-Time Designs, Inc. This letter clearly specifies the administrative areas where legislative and/or regulatory assistance is required and needed in order to make the automated handling of Simultaneous Network Non-Duplication and Syndicated Exclusivity a viable and working system.

It seems that to have any chance of working, the "steering signals" required to accomplish the above must "survive" the video pathway to the cable headend. If such signals are to be placed in the video portion of the composite signal and as a practical matter, survive, it seems they must be placed in some portion of the "active video" which is safe from alteration by subsequent signal processing.

As you know there are several different services currently operating under permissive authority on Line 22 of the active video. None of these services, their technologies or their coding schemes came into being at the same time, or with regard for one another, as each was figuring on being mutually exclusive. Clearly, at first the commission thought so as well, but even more clearly now, this is not the case. Most recently we have seen the need of two of these services to have their codes "co-reside" on Line 22 simultaneously. Therefore as the history indicates, and as one might expect, this has resulted in a situation which makes for neither orderly or efficient use of this very limited and useful resource called Line 22, and as it now stands provides no room for additional uses or services.

We need to rethink this matter. I need your assistance in assembling a technical committee composed of all interested parties in order to develop and define an integrated, all-services oriented Line 22 coding scheme and system which accommodates the interests of all the parties using it to provide services. This committee needs to end the currently existing

confusion, mutual interference, and non-compatibility existing due to the lack of a coherent signaling language and its resulting technology, by getting down to work and creating one. Absent the success of such a committee to perform this task as required, I need your help in bringing about a rule making proceeding at the FCC to handle this matter, so that we can get on with implementing the solutions for these pressing Cable/Broadcast related problems.

If the resulting cost reduction benefits from accurately automating the handling of Syndicated Exclusivity and Simultaneous Network Non-Duplication were not enough, the benefit of improved and cooperative relations between the members of the Cable and Broadcast industries certainly is.

Very truly yours,

A. D. Petersen

A. D. Petersen
President

ADP:sw
Encl.

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March 7, 1990

Mr. Dean Peterson
TDS Engineering Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 297
Carthage, MO 64836

Dear Dean:

This letter will confirm our telephone conversation yesterday regarding th use of coded information within the structure of the television signal for the purpose of automatically controlling program related switching functions within the Cable Television HeadEnd, and your desire to create a demonstration setup for such a system tentatively to include 2 broadcast stations and 2 cable systems.

The approach offers a solution to the problem of network non-duplication and syndex as well as a means of protecting the interests of local broadcasters. It also offers a solution to the problems of "pre-scheduled" switching, or manual switching, which are required of the cablecaster at this time, and while they don't work well, or solve the real problems, still require a great deal of effort and expense on the part of the cablecaster.

Thus, the biggest advantage such an approach has is that it can be aimed at resolving the related business issues of all the parties concerned in the situation, while adding stability and certainty to the program schedules of cable viewers.

As with every solution there are requirements. The broadcaster would be responsible for transmitting the identifiers on all program material which requires protection. The cablecaster would then be responsible for the means necessary to perform the switching related to the coded programs and thus accomplish the stated goals in accordance with the "rules" agreed to between the cable operator and the broadcaster.

This, or any other inserted code, or identity signalling based steering system, will only perform as designed if those codes or signals are present absolutely, positively, and correctly all of the time.

Therefore, the need to have a very strong assurance of interest, and level of commitment for such an undertaking shown from organizations such as the NAB on the side of the broadcasters, and the NCTA on the part of cablecasters, is absolutely critical.

The other most important issue leading to the success of any such inserted code signalling system is where to place such codes. As things stand, the FCC must be asked, and must show a willingness to go to rulemaking with respect to the coding format and transmission positions of the program and station identifier signals to be used in the system.

Under current rulings, and as a truly practical matter, there just isn't any "designated space" available for signals required to make such a system operate properly. If what is now allocated for general data transmission were used it would in someway interfere with or preempt some pre-existing service, or this service would become interfered with or be preempted by one or other of the same pre-existing services, thus making the system immediately unreliable and inviable.

As to permissive authorizations, the history here clearly shows that this approach leads to confusion, non-compatibility, and congestion where permission to use "special signals" is granted outside of the global considerations required of rulemaking. This would be totally inappropriate for the stated objectives of this system, and indeed, has been found so for some others as well.

What is really needed are a set of FCC rules which allow for all the data signalling objectives of each of the members of the television broadcast, cablecast, advertising, syndication, and network communities to be met in a non-conflicting, and non-preemptive manner, so that each of their business objectives are thus reliably reached in as predictable and straight-forward a fashion as possible.

We must know that the FCC will act on this in a global fashion, and set before us, clear and straight, a correct path of action, before we begin the investment of time and money in anything past minor testing. I know that all this can all be worked out when the commission decides to do so, and that all parties, new and old can be accommodated by rules which fully address all the issues.

As we discussed, the technology for accomplishing this has been developed, and it has the ability to accomplish the tasks required as you have outlined them, but I feel these other issues are, at this time, equally if not far more important.

Given the current state of product development for the system and its current deployment readiness, in order to prepare for, and conduct a 2 station, and a 2 cable system test from start to finish will require a $40,000 expenditure on someone's part.

Dean, when on occasion I have been stopped dead in the water and have had to go back, often times at great expense, and "invent" my way around something, it usually wasn't because of something technical, but rather the something was a roadblock where the political rules of the road were not made clear enough at the outset. So, let us please together, make the effort of seeing to it that what we know will work technically, and which we will demonstrate does work, first has the benefit of support and approval from all the parties concerned and involved. I will be of help in any way I can.

Good Luck with your meetings,
Sincerely,

Robert C. Copriviza
President/CEO
cc: Wiley, Rein, Fielding: Mimi W. Dawson
CH/RCC/FAX/PDSDP902